

From: Clyde Rogers
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/17/02 8:42pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

This is a comment on the Microsoft antitrust settlement.

As a citizen of the United States, I wish to express my deep disapproval of the recent proposed Microsoft settlement (which allowed Microsoft to dump their products on the educational market). In fact, I believe that any settlement that involves Microsoft products to be only a boon to the company, and not a punishment in any sense. If Microsoft is to atone for its unfair practices, it must move to level the software development landscape.

Microsoft should be required to publish detailed interoperability documentation for existing versions of its Windows operating systems. No Microsoft program should be allowed to take advantage of undocumented operating system features, and no Microsoft application program should be developed with insider resources unavailable to other corporations. If Microsoft is unwilling to propose reasonable plans that ensure and verify this separation, then Microsoft operating system development and application development must be split into separate corporations.

Microsoft should also be required to publish (and adhere to) complete specifications of all defacto standard document formats (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, etc.). Many of these formats were published in previous times, but are no longer published now that the competition has been dispensed with. As these formats have become the standard format for their respective applications, no competition can be expected to arise without access to accurate documentation of their construction.

Microsoft also must be required to maintain these documented interfaces as public standards. Microsoft must retain ownership of the standards, but must not be allowed to change the standards gratuitously (to drive the competition out of business again). Thus either an industry committee must be involved in making changes, or at the very least, changes must be approved and published some months before products implementing those standards are released to the public by any corporation.

Thank you,
Clyde Rogers